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THE TRIESTE COMPROMISE

By Alexander Boeker

Allied handling of the Trieste issue, the central problem of the pending Italian peace treaty, is a discouraging example of how not to make peace.

The Foreign Ministers of the Big Four were faced with a problem of political science. Their task was to adjust the conflicting ethnic claims of Italy and Yugoslavia with due regard for the wishes of the local inhabitants; to safeguard freedom of trade and transit through the port of Trieste to the landlocked Central European States -- Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia -- as well as to Italy and Yugoslavia; and to fix a line of demarcation between the rival strategic interests of the Eastern and Western Power blocs.

There is nothing intrinsically insoluble in any of these three issues. An internationally supervised plebiscite in the disputed province of Venezia Giulia, which embraces Trieste, could easily have determined the respective areas where Italian or Yugoslav sentiments predominate. An equitable frontier could then have been fixed by leaving approximately as many Italians under Yugoslav rule as the number of Yugoslavs remaining under Italian sovereignty. This would have encouraged both parties to treat their minorities fairly. And a solution of this kind is the only one compatible with the Atlantic Charter.

All that was necessary to safeguard the economic interests of Central Europe in Trieste was to internationalize the port and to make provision for duty-free transit of goods on Italian and Yugoslav railroads serving it. There was no need to create a Free State of Trieste with all the attendant political complications which had proved fatal in the parallel cases of Fiume and Danzig.

As to a demarcation line between Eastern and Western strategic interests, a fairly satisfactory boundary already existed in the so-called Morgan Line, across which Anglo-American and Yugoslav armies have faced each other since the early summer of 1945. It would seem to be in the interests of the Western Powers not to abandon this line -- which already embodies considerable compromise -- save in return for very solid and worth-while concessions. Nor can Russia be interested in

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having its satellites push farther West, unless as a prelude to a more far-reaching program of conquest.

II

Why this simple and obvious solution of the Trieste problem was discarded by the Western Powers is difficult to see. Unlike the Balkans and other parts of the globe under the physical control of the Soviet Union, Trieste and the Western half of Venezia Giulia were and are occupied by American and British troops whose presence could assure a settlement in line with the principles for which the war was fought.

No solution, to be sure, would satisfy everybody. The present draft of the Italian treaty, however, has the singular distinction of satisfyirg nobody. The decision to sever hundreds of thousands of Italians from their motherland will leave a lasting sense of grievance with the newborn Italian Republic, forcing it into channels of dangerous irredentism. With Tito's appetite whetted by the acquisition of almost all of Istria, including the naval base of Pola, it should not be surprising to find Communist Yugoslavia itching to use the first opportunity for seizing Trieste itself.

The preponderantly Italian inhabitants of Trieste will hardly feel happy at being cut off from their countrymen, nor secure under the tenuous protection of the United Nations, hamstrung by the veto power. The interests of the Central European States in Trieste have been jeopardized by the proposal to put all direct road and rail communications between that port and Austria under totalitarian Yugoslav rule. Assuming that present arrangements stand, the Anglo-Saxon Powers will be continuously anxious about the uneasy truce which is arranged, and Russia will feel that only Western trickery prevented it from gaining control of the Adriatic.

Mr. Sumner Welles says in his recent book Where Are We Heading?:

> "If this decision is permitted to stand it will mean persistent ill will between the Italians and the Yugoslavs, years of agitation and propaganda, and what is most serious of all, persistent pressure by the Soviet Union, as a member of the international body governing the city, to obtain actual, if not open, control of Trieste and over the trade passing through the port."

Once again a false procedural approach (see HUMAN EVENTS, Nov. 6) is working to vitiate the peacemaking process. Instead of negotiating a treaty with Italy, the former enemy turned co-belligerent, the Big Four decided to arrange the matter among themselves and to impose their terms. Consequently, the clashing interests of the Atlantic and Eurasian Super-States have overshadowed and obscured the local interests and problems at issue.

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Having thus sacrificed principle to expediency, the Western statesmen soon lost sight of expediency too. For if it is true that the real issue is not drawn between the Allies and their former enemies, but between the Eastern and Western ends of the wartime alliance, it would have been only common sense to give the fullest backing to Italy, which is strategically and economically within the area of Western control. Moreover, like novices at the business of horse trading, Mr. Byrnes and Mr. Bevin approached the conference table with minimum demands which, when bargained off against the maximum program of their Slavic opponents, resulted in a compromise only a few inches short of surrender.

An alternative method would have been for Russia and the Western Powers to agree to disinterest themselves from the Italo-Yugoslav dispute -- except to the extent of insisting on a free port arrangement -- and merely to supervise the negotiation of a bilateral agreement between the two Adriatic nations. The frontier thus agreed upon could have been made the subject of an Adriatic Locarno, with Great Britain and the United States guaranteeing Italy against Yugoslav inroads, and Russia guaranteeing Yugoslavia against Italian aggression. In case no agreement of the sort were attainable, the Anglo-Americans could simply hold on to the Morgan Line until Tito saw fit to come to reasonable terms.

The gravest objection to the present "solution" is that it does not solve anything, but merely creates a chronic danger spot. If Western statesmen aimed at making the Trieste territory politically viable, they could hardly have missed the mark more completely. As a look at the map will show, the borders of the proposed Free State will be more than 90 per cent with Yugoslavia, less than 10 per cent with Italy. Since Tito has a standing and well-equipped army of over 600,000 men, whereas the Italian army, under the proposed treaty terms, will be limited to 180,000 men, Trieste's military situation will be all but hopeless. The proposed United Nations force, which is to take over after the withdrawal of the British, American and Yugoslav troops now in the territory, will be up against a formidable test. French troops stationed in Fiume under similar circumstances never fired a shot when Gabriele d'Annunzio staged his coup in 1919.

To make matters worse, Trieste's supply of water, electric power and food lies exclusively in what will be Yugoslav territory, and only one tenuous coastal road and railroad will connect the Trieste territory with the non-Slav world. With all these trumps placed in his hands, Tito will have to become a model of moderation to resist the temptation of seizing all Trieste at the first opportunity, or, if such an occasion

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should not arise, to strangle it and render it useless. In either case his task will be made easier by the Trojan Horses which the Soviet bloc will have within the Trieste Government itself.

IV

It was against a phony "solution" of this kind that the London Economist warned in its issue of August 17:

> "A genuinely international and impartial administration of Trieste might well be an acceptable compromise. But if one of the Great Powers, fortified by its right of veto in the Security Council, is determined to turn the international regime into a mere cloak for Jugoslav annexation, it might be better to abandon the compromise and fight the matter out between two sovereignties, Italian or Jugoslav. That would mean an extended crisis now, but the alternative might mean a chronic crisis later."

This passage touches the root of Anglo-American failure. With their eyes fixed on the domestic scene, the American and British representatives preferred a sham solution now to a real solution later. To return from the conference table without a document called a "peace treaty" would be considered at home as a sign of failure. A signed piece of paper, no matter how unworkable its contents, looks like success to the public. This exemplifies a fatal weak spot of democracies in the field of foreign affairs, a weakness responsible for many a mistake that led to the rise of Mussolini and Hitler.

On at least two fateful occasions this psychology demonstrably prevailed among the United States delegates: First on July 3, in Paris, when the so-called "French compromise" was accepted, creating the dangerous device of an International Territory of Trieste and giving Yugoslavia a frontier far more favorable than any the United States and Britain had previously admitted as tolerable.

The second instance occurred in New York on November 27 when a formula was found for the withdrawal of troops which in effect would permit Tito to occupy Pola and Northern Venezia Giulia before he had demonstrated any willingness to play fair over Trieste. In both cases the predominant American motive was to arrive at some agreement with Russia even if the dictates of common sense and principle had to be sacrificed.

Each time there was much rejoicing at the "breaking of the log jam." Time will tell whether we did not also break the dam that restrained the flood.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. III, NO. 51

By Frank C. Hanighen December 18, 1946

One startling international development has received little recognition in the press -- doubtless because our Fourth Estate is relaxing after its recent exertions against John L. Lewis. The sudden collapse of the Moscow-controlled government of Azerbaijan before the armed intervention of the Iranian Government is a fact of the first magnitude. After all, the struggle for this Iranian province resulted in a major conflict in UN last spring, and at the time seemed likely to end in war. The abandonment of its Azerbaijan fifth column by Moscow represents a notable retreat in Russian foreign policy.

Save for a few cretins of the fellow traveller category, no one believes that the Moscow volte-face springs from a sudden Russian conversion to the Christmas spirit. Observers are split in their interpretations. The most obvious explanation is quite persuasive. The Azerbaijan retreat, it is claimed, is but part of a general new "moderate" policy on the part of Moscow. The Kremlin, so runs the argument, believes that it has reached the limit of its "tough" expansionist policy and that honey, now, will catch more flies. Hence the "concessions" in New York at the Council of Foreign Ministers and UN -- and hence, also, Azerbaijan. The moral is simple: our "firm" policy has won a complete victory in Iran.

Another school of thought, while granting much of the above argument, reaches a less comforting conclusion. It is noted that the yielding in Azerbaijan represents less a surrender to the United States than to Britain. We have fewer vital interests in the Near East than has the British Empire; and it was Britain that most effectively combatted the Russian expansion southward towards the Persian Gulf. Ergo, the Azerbaijan retreat, in the general scheme of Russian policy, is a sop to a Britain which recently produced the sensational Parliamentary revolt led by Mr. R. H. S. Crossman. Dick "Double-Crossman" wants Britain to "get out from under" the wing of Washington, to take a position in the middle between Russia and America and to play both ends, certainly a policy not unknown in Whitehall annals. Russia, confident that its diplomats can successfully hold up their end with the British Foreign Office, would like to divide Britain and the United States. To further this objective, therefore, the Azerbaijan retreat might well have been calculated to encourage the Los von Washington movement in Britain.

To test this interpretation, it is necessary to watch, say, Northern Greece, another vital and turbulent British sphere of influence. If Russia tries to appease Britain there, and if Britain nods acknowledgement, then Russia will have registered success. Otherwise, the Bevin-Byrnes axis will continue to work and Russia will have lost a couple of tricks in the most treacherous of all games -- world politics.

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The Eisenhower affair -- is it boom or bubble? Certain newsmen in a private interview recently listened as the General explained (1) that he has no political ambitions; (2) that present talk to that effect is not only without his encouragement, but (3) is against his wishes. The aforesaid scribes concluded that Eisenhower was right about (3) -- which is a pretty good margin of candor for one of those whom "the lightning may strike."

What the newsmen meant was that the flesh is weak and that the General rather likes to have himself mentioned as timber; but that he doesn't fancy being the Democratic candidate in 1948. Eisenhower not unnaturally has no ambition to go down in

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history beside Cox, Davis and other also-rans. The way certain Democratic columnists have fallen in love with the Eisenhower-for-President idea has given him, willy-nilly, a Democratic flavor; and the General's not too diplomatic address to the CIO Convention is remembered. The Eisenhower spleen today may arise in part from the fact that the Republicans haven't exerted themselves to "rush" him.

"Eisenhower," remarked one political sage, "would rather be a Republican than a Democrat, and he'd rather be a general than a Democratic candidate in 1948."

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If there are any doubts about the necessity of our decision to eliminate UNRRA and that agency's flamboyant director, Fiorella LaGuardia, the following story -- so far kept sedulously "under the hat" -- should resolve them. Week before last, Chinese Communist leaders protested to UNRRA that only three-fourths of one per cent of UNRRA supplies allocated to them had been made available by the Chinese National Government. News of this protest, strangely enough, was broadcast from Moscow the next day and was picked up by the State Department. State's predominating affection for the Chinese Communists is a well-known constant in our foreign policy. Colonel Lester Ward, an assistant to Will Clayton, asked UNRRA to look into the matter. UNRRA did and wired its branch in China to protest strongly to Chiang Kai-shek's Government. And Mr. LaGuardia was so aroused that he ordered the matter placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Then the Chinese Embassy in Washington moved into action, and informed LaGuardia that the Communist charge was false. The Embassy, however, centered its protest on UNRRA's extraordinary procedure of considering the claim of a political party, in rebellion against the legitimate and recognized government of China. If Mr. LaGuardia insisted on retaining the question on the agenda, then the Chinese representative on UNRRA would request that that body also consider the protests of the Polish Underground. This subterranean organization, now in revolt against the Russian-puppet government in Warsaw, had complained because its members received no supplies from UNRRA. Mr. LaGuardia apparently recognized that "what's sauce for the goose," etc., and hastily withdrew the Chinese Communist protest from UNRRA's already too controversial agenda.

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Big Government clings tenaciously to its war-born powers. During the election campaign the Republican Party called for a Congressional resolution terminating World War II and with it all the wartime emergency powers of the Executive. But in the past week fears have been expressed that such a measure would adversely affect maintenance of our armed forces abroad, not to mention our domestic economy. The source of the fears can be located in Government offices, always jealous of prerogative and apprehensive of Congress. Commentators echoing these sentiments contrive to give a vague impression that the new legislative body would be unmannerly if it crudely wiped the slate clean of the sacred decree-laws of wartime.

A great deal is heard of a certain report issued by Congressman Earl R. Lewis which argues against blanket repeal and claims that out of approximately 500 war powers, only 46 minor ones could be removed without injurious results. Lewis is head of a special Republican Congressional committee set up to study this subject. At the same time, Leftist papers allege -- we believe inaccurately -- that Truman wants retention of war powers, such as the Smith-Connally Act, to break strikes.

These prospects, it is reassuring to hear, are strongly discounted by leaders of the new 80th Congress. These individuals minimize the importance of the Lewis report, pointing out that the committee has only an advisory function. They deprecate the fears of the armed services and other agencies of the Government that repeal would have unhappy consequences. If special powers are really needed, it is

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emphasized, special bills can be passed to continue them, after the blanket repeal is passed. Normal legislative processes can take care of such a situation.

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The late Sidney Hillman's brain-child, the WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions), is being used effectively as an instrument of Communist agitation in the Near East and Mediterranean. Advertising their connections with British and American trade unions, WFTU organizers have made much progress in places where they would have faced expulsion had they carried the Soviet label. They have started strikes in southern Iran among the oil-workers of the Anglo-Iranian Petroleum Company. They have managed to organize the railway workers in adjoining Iraq, a country hitherto hardly touched by the trade-union movement. They have invaded troubled Palestine. But their greatest gains are said to be in French North Africa. It has been noted that most of the WFTU agents in the Mediterranean and Near East areas are French, sent out from the WFTU headquarters in Paris. And wherever the WFTU penetrates, there appears the unmistakable line -- "fight Anglo-American imperialism," "withdraw British troops from Greece," "long live the Chinese Communists," "Democratic Yugoslavia must have Trieste," etc.

The WFTU was formed in February, 1945, in London, with a heavy proportion of Soviet Russian delegates as well as representatives from Leftist trade-union organizations elsewhere. The American Federation of Labor refused to join, but the CIO under Sidney Hillman's direction assumed a prominent role in the new federation. Britain's Trade Union Congress went along rather reluctantly. This column on December 21, 1944, predicted that the new organization, then in process of formation, was "likely to become the machinery for the spreading of Communist ideology throughout the world."

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We felt distinct symptoms, during the past few weeks, of our gorge rising as it hadn't since the court-packing scheme of 1937. One matter precipitated the uncomfortable old feeling. According to a prominent commentator, discussing the end of the coal strike, Chief Justice Vinson told President Truman that a majority of the Supreme Court would uphold Judge Goldsborough's decision against the mine workers. Now, it is not -- to put it mildly -- one of the duties of a Supreme Court Justice to talk this way to one party of interest to a suit, even if that party be the President of the United States. "Highly unethical" and "unjudicial conduct" were the words of a prominent lawyer friend who added that if the charge were true, the Chief Justice had committed an offense justifying impeachment proceedings. If, on the other hand, the story was untrue, the Justice should have issued a public denial; and the commentator should have been cited for contempt of court.

Nor was that all. Our distaste was prolonged by listening to some corporation lawyers wrangle about the case. Instead of exchanging informed references to past opinions of the various High Court Justices, these men of law argued as to how strongly "New Dealish" would this or that Justice prove; whether the majority would heed the election returns, in accordance with the famous dictum of Mr. Dooley; and which way the purported aspirations of several for high elective office would sway them in dispensing justice. It may be inaccurate to treat the present, shocking atmosphere as unprecedented, to pretend that it wasn't thus in the times of Finley Peter Dunne or Dred Scott. But it is dismaying to note the gulf separating the hectic attitude of the past few weeks and the atmosphere of the year 1801, when at a dinner in Washington given for Secretary of the Treasury Oliver Wolcott the following toast was offered: "The Judiciary of the United States -- independent of party, independent of power, and independent of popularity."

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Notes and Quotes

"The children of this world are in their generation wiser. . . ." An A.P. dispatch (December 9) from Darmstadt, Germany, reports: "Nearly 5,000 toys made by Darmstadt's 8,400 school children were handed over to the American Military Government with a request that they be used to fill the Christmas stockings of American children. The children made the toys as an expression of gratitude for the American Friends Service Committee's relief work in providing the Darmstadt children with one extra warm meal a day."

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The Arabs are sensitive, too. Mr. Richard B. Sanger of the State Department, in the American Foreign Service Journal (August 1946) relates the ups and downs of the American diplomatic mission to San'a, capital of the Arabian kingdom of Yemen. During the first ten days of negotiations for a treaty, everything went well -- then: "We turned on the radio . . . for the morning news and heard the word that the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine had submitted its report recommending, among other proposals, the admission of 100,000 Jews to Palestine. No direct reference was ever made to this but the political atmosphere of San'a immediately changed. Foreign-minded Raghib Bey and his ghat-chewing assistant, Abdelkrim Moutahhar, disappeared from the scene and were replaced by one of the most religious of the sons of the Imam. Four days of long drawn-out meetings, broken by an exchange of notes followed. . . . It was a complete deadlock." Mr. Sanger relates how victory was finally snatched from defeat, how the treaty was signed and the first radio broadcast went forth from medieval San'a: "The little mountain kingdom of Yemen, the Tibet of the Red Sea, had begun its march into the 20th century."

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In the British House of Lords, November 6, 1946, Lord Saltoun deplores the present famine conditions in Germany and seeks a way out (London Times report on debate): "In searching for reasons for the present position he [Lord Saltoun] had not the slightest doubt that this country could have made peace by negotiation with the Germans any time after the middle of 1944, but we had spent 14,000,000 [pounds] daily and sacrificed thousands of lives in obtaining unconditional surrender. It would be a betrayal of the dead who gave us that victory if we turned our backs on the duties which civilized countries always considered as incumbent on them in such circumstances. If the Potsdam agreement had broken down, it would be better to admit it, and go back to the original idea of control and not of administration, giving the Germans a chance to rise to their feet by their own efforts. Instead, the Germans now considered us both brutal and stupid, and the Government should do everything possible to remove that impression. (Cheers)"

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Gratitude is due the Reverend A. E. Potts for a satisfying tirade in the Michigan Times: "Every once in a while a new word is invented to fit a new situation to which the old word no longer applies. The time has come to invent a word to replace 'LIBERAL' . . . According to the dictionary a 'liberal' is one that is 'free in his views'; 'unrestricted by letter'; 'generous in spirit'; and 'broad-minded.' According to the record of the behavior of the so-called political liberals, they are the exact opposite. . . . Disagree with a so-called liberal and he will call you a Hooverite, a reactionary, a plutocrat, an economic royalist, a greedy capitalist, a war monger, an anti-Semite, an inflationist, an obstructionist, and of course a Fascist. Fascist is really the favored word of scorn in every so-called liberal's vocabulary. A so-called liberal simply couldn't carry on an argument without the support of the so-clinching retort that his opponent is a Fascist."

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